

What is an A+ Integrated Unit?

An A+ integrated unit is developed from the connections that were made among state objectives, concepts and skills during the process of curriculum mapping. It is developed by a team of teachers and provides integration across various subject areas and/or grade levels.

Questions to Guide the Planning Process:

1. What is it you want students to know and why do you want them to know it?
 - What are the objectives from the state-mandated curriculum?
 - What are the big issues, concepts or themes?
 - What are the essential questions?
2. What environment will provide the opportunity for students to learn this?
 - What disciplines will be integrated?
 - What activities will allow all students to learn in the ways they learn best?
 - Who will be involved in creating this environment?
 - What resources are needed to create this environment?
3. How will you know when students know it?
 - What events will allow students to demonstrate what they know?
 - What types of assessment will be used and for what purposes?
 - What enriched assessments unique to A+ Schools will be used?
 - How will the assessments guide your next steps?

A+ Integrated Units:

- ◆ Address state curriculum
- ◆ Stem from Essential Questions that address large issues/big ideas
- ◆ Begin with enriched assessment in mind
- ◆ Are interdisciplinary
- ◆ Are arts-integrated
- ◆ Typically address a variety of Multiple Intelligences
- ◆ Are developed through intentional collaboration
- ◆ Use unexpected outcomes for future learning

ESSENTIALS OF A+ INTEGRATED UNIT PLANNING

Characteristics of Essential Questions:

- They guide planning by beginning with the questions: What do I want my students to know about this concept? How will I know when they know it? How will they know when they know it?
- They require more than a finite answer.
- They promote divergent (many disciplines, potential connections, thoughts and answers) rather than convergent (focusing in; one right answer) thinking.
- They connect a range of disciplines.
- They are presented in a logical progression and are not repetitive.
- They demonstrate higher order thinking skills (through Blooms' Taxonomy).
- They are developmentally appropriate.
- They are written as students would ask them and are in language and terminology that every student can understand.
- They are not secret, but rather are on display throughout the unit.

Tools for Integrated Unit Development:

- Curriculum maps, based on state curriculum
- Sample planning web(s) - blank and filled-in
- Trade books and adopted texts
- Planning books from past years
- Calendar of school and community events (ie: field trips, local arts productions and exhibitions, etc.)
- Other “drivers” (ie: grants, initiatives, district mandates, school-wide focus or event)

Adapted from North Carolina A+ Schools, revised by Oklahoma A+ Schools